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Quotes from the UK about the “Wider Opportunities in Music” program

Wider Opportunities grew out of the Government's pledge that “over time, every primary school child that wants to, should have the opportunity of learning a musical instrument”.

David Blunkett, UK Secretary of State for Education, Department for Education and Skills, schools White Paper, September 2001

“The main aim of this programme is to create opportunities, over time, for every KS2 pupil to receive a sustained period of tuition on a musical instrument or to receive specialist vocal tuition. The learning experience will allow every child to have first hand experience of live music, group singing, ensemble playing, performance and composing. The programme in schools should look to ‘normalise’ instrumental and vocal learning – so that every child considers him or herself to be a musician. It should provide opportunities for classroom teachers and music specialists to learn from one another by jointly planning and delivering enhanced musical experiences.

It should continue work to bridge the gap between music learning which takes place within and beyond the school and introduce young people to the widest possible range of musical instruments, traditions and styles. Finally, it should complement and enhance the school's overall provision for music; including the National Curriculum, extra-curricular activities and the extended schools programme.”

UK Government Department for Education and Skills 2007

“Wider Opportunities gives children the chance to learn music in curriculum time through playing a musical instrument. It is valuable for the complete experience it gives the child; all will develop a greater understanding of what is involved in music-making. They learn that it can be fun, that it requires time and effort, discipline and team-work, and that, as well as being rewarding in itself, it can give pleasure to others. They gain a real insight into the world of music, working with a professional musician, and for some this may be the start of a life-long hobby. . Some schools offer extension classes beyond the initial year while in all there will be children who wish to continue with music lessons. This may be on the wider opportunities instrument or on another or through vocal work.”

Hertfordshire Music Service

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“Wider Opportunities (WO) has successfully introduced music to children; 96% of primary schools surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that WO has provided instrumental education to those children who would otherwise not receive it.”

From Wow its Music Next – A research project by The Engine Room, (UAL) September 2009

“Teaching and learning improve, and standards are higher, where successful new partnerships have been formed between school-based staff, Music Service tutors and professional musicians; some of the best quality is when all three work together to co-teach large numbers of pupils.”

From Main Findings ‘Tuning In’ – UK Government’s Office for standards in Education (Ofsted) Evaluation report

“The Wider Opportunities policy is leading to the significant transformation of music education for all pupils in KS2.”

UK Government’s Office for standards in Education, Primary Music report 2005

Ofsted judged 67% of Wider Opportunities sessions to be ‘good or outstanding’ – as compared with 43% of conventional Key Stage 2 music sessions.